



THE  
BUSY BODY.

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NUMBER VII.

To be continued every TUESDAY, THURSDAY, and SATURDAY.

[ Price TWO-PENCE. ]

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TUESDAY, October the 22d, 1759.

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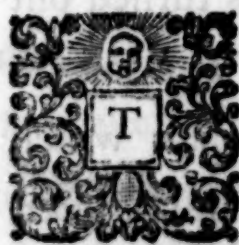
*Nam genus et proavos et quæ non fecimus ipsi,  
Vix ea nostra voco.*

OVID.

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To the Author of the Busy Body.

S I R,



HE circumstantial account you lately communicated to the public of the genealogy of the Busy Bodies, induces me to believe, that I have the honour of belonging to a branch of that extensive family. I have often heard my father, old Peter Ubiquist, relate wonderful stories of his cousin Jack Busy Body, the celebrated comedian, in whose pedigree, which he left my father as a precious legacy, my mother's name, Marplot, is grafted on almost every sprig. But the strongest testimony, I can alledge, in support of my pretensions, is the exact similitude of



of manners, and that intriguing spirit, which so eminently displayed itself in the conduct of my parents, and which wholly characterises mine.

OLD Peter was first bound 'prentice to an eminent taylor at St. Alban's; but finding a sedentary life unsuitable to his active disposition, eloped three days after signing the indentures, and, notwithstanding three advertisements, in which his name, age, and more especially a remarkable figure, were exactly specified, got safe to this great metropolis. Here, after much enquiry, he discovered a distant relation, who kept a bookseller's shop in the Strand. Being admitted into the family, his sprightly temper soon recommended him to his patron, who thought him a fit person to run on errands and perform other by-jobs. What an agreeable surprize to a youth of his lively cast to be a witness to the ingenious frauds practised in the literary world! To see a Grub-street writer assume the title of a bishop, or personate a captain of a man of war; correspond familiarly with ministers and generals, whom he had never seen; write farces, and palm them on a man of honour; in a word, translate original papers from the French, though he understood not one syllable of that idiom; and then in order to sell his work, get it burnt by the hangman of Brussels or Avignon. Young Peter could not refrain his satyrical humour on these occasions, and displayed his vein to such extravagance, that he was turned out of doors with disgrace. A fertile genius is never at a loss to find out ways and means. My father turned politician, which science, though it has been the ruin of many an upholsterer, proved highly beneficial to one, who had a talent of exerting it to the best advantage. He did not spend his leisure in forming schemes for the payment of national debts by a lottery or new tax. Jacob Henriques, with his seven blessed daughters, had already usurped that province. At all hours of the day he made his appearance in the most busy places; would



would mix with the merchants on 'Change, the brokers in Exchange-Alley, the French Hugonots at Slaughter's, and was always sure by the evening to have a budget full of news. This intelligence, whether true or false, he retailed to the Advertisers. He has often alarmed the town with an intended invasion, nay, has landed fifteen thousand men on the coast of Suffex, and disturbed the rest of a noble lord at two o'clock in the morning. He constantly furnished the Wh--t--l Evening-Post with fresh advice from his correspondents, especially when the foreign packets were detained by contrary winds. He could fill up a gap with the recital of a scuffle between four young sparks and a couple of decrepit watchmen: A broken leg, or fractured skull, gave him no great satisfaction; but a murder, attended with bloody circumstances, was a most agreeable piece of news; and he took as much delight in a rape, as the person who committed it. Some years before, he had taken to himself as lawful wife, Ann Marplot, as notable a woman as was then known in her neighbourhood. She had been dismissed from half a dozen houses for having neglected holy David's precept, of keeping a guard on her tongue; but this open disposition of mind served only to ingratiate her the more with Peter Ubiquist. They were so busy the first week of their marriage, that at the end of eight months and fourteen days my mother was happily delivered of a fine boy. She now gloried in her virtuous fecundity, and thought herself so much above the commonalty of her sex, that she grew intolerable, not only to the young marriageable girls, but even to those that were already engaged in that happy state. I have since been creditably informed, that within the space of two years, she had occasioned four divorces, and prevented twenty marriages; at which time finding her whole strength well-nigh exhausted, she sought some repose in the next world, as she had met with none in this.

For



For my part, since I first enjoyed the use of memory, I know I past very few idle hours, though I cannot recollect that I let loose many Marmosets, or broke much china. In a word, the first remarkable circumstance that distinguished me in the world, was owing to a country-election, where I exerted my abilities to such a degree, founded the Words *Liberty* and *Property* with such an Emphasis, and exclaimed so terribly against the Jews, that, after many contests, I carried the point in behalf of a candidate, who had it in his power to befriend me, against a person, who had nothing to recommend him but an incorruptible attachment to the laws and liberties of his country. I must not forget, that I was in great measure indebted for my success to the fierce countenance of fourscore Irish chairmen, whom, to keep peace and decorum, I had ordered down from London, some with their poles, and others with oak-faplings, My patron loaded me with caresses, and on my return to the capital, procured me a genteel employment, which, however, he has since converted into a sine-cure, not being able to dispense with my services on more important occasions, though (what few of my fellow-pensioners can say, I am neither his spy nor pimp. His favours have enabled me to lead a life entirely conformable to my natural disposition. I rise early in the morning, and suck in the news as fresh and as hot as my coffee. I trace out the occupations of the ensuing day, mark the number of visits, take down a list of military and civil promotions, and ecclesiastical preferments, call on Tom Medler, Joe Politic, or some other entertaining friend. Within these two months I have paid eight hundred and forty-six visits, and distributed five hundred cards: I have complimented sixty officers on the honour his majesty has done them, forty clergymen on presentations, inductions, and translations. On examining my memorandum-book this morning, I calculated, that since my first appearance in the genteel world, I have paid my compliments of congratulation  
to



to five hundred and sixty bridegrooms together with their brides, have assisted at a thousand christenings, and condoled, in form, with two thousand families on the decease of a parent, or near relation. But the most surprizing circumstance is, that, on any occasion, whether joyous or mournful, I have never yet been at a loss for a compliment grave or serious, a repartee, or a pun, which I have always found of vast resource to enliven a drooping conversation. It is true, that I have learnt the best part of Joe Miller and Killigrew by heart; that I have selected thirty epigrams, ten conundrums, nine acrostics, and as many riddles. By jumbling these together, and having them always at command, I am esteemed in all companies as one of the most witty persons of the age; the most judicious, and the most entertaining. I have picked up some information during the course of my rambles, which I shall take care to communicate to you.

I HAVE raked up all the scandal that usually attends at card and tea-tables, and such other idle places. I verily believe the ladies of q---y have already afforded sufficient matter to compose a new Atalantis. A pious lady of sixty-three, as I could conjecture, though she only owned to be forty, imparted to me several new adventures of M---s K----y F---r, at which she expressed her highest indignation, and severely inveighed against the degeneracy and bad taste of the age. My female acquaintance have an unexhausted fund of raillery and personal defamation, while our own sex are chiefly buried in affairs of seemingly greater importance. We have lately established six magazines in a country, where it was thought the Prussians must infallibly starve; we have paved a plain road through a morass, considered hitherto as impracticable, and have in it a passage through a rocky mountain, which might have obstructed the rapid progress of the king of Prussia, after having repulsed the Russians, and defeated marshal Daun. It would be a pity such discoveries should



should escape the notice of a Busy Body, who is more properly denominated by his curious and wonderful actions, than the very name he bears.

To convey my intelligence in the most impartial manner, and through the purest channels, shall always be the chief endeavour of,

S I R,

Your affectionate kinsman,

THOMAS UBIQUIST.

*On the taking of QUEBEC.*

**A** MIDST the clamour of exulting joys,  
Which triumph forces from the patriot heart;  
Grief dares to mingle her soul-piercing voice,  
And quells the raptures which from pleasures start;  
O WOLFE, to thee a streaming flood of wee  
Sighing we pay, and think e'en conquest dear,  
QUEBEC in vain shall teach our breast to glow,  
Whilst thy sad fate extorts the heart-wrung tear.  
Alive the foe thy dreadful vigour fled,  
And saw thee fall with joy-pronouncing eyes;  
Yet they shall know thou conquerest, tho' dead!  
Since from thy tomb a thousand heroes rise.

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\* In order to oblige such of my relations, as choose to promote my work, Mr. POTTINGER, my publisher, at the *Dunciad* in Pater-noster-Row, has, in allusion to his own sign, and to the fable of Apuleius, placed a *Golden Ass* in his shop, to receive their offerings; and I doubt not but their contributions will make his *Ass* as famous for its wit, as *Button's Lion* was for its eloquence.